



ATTITUDE AND PROBLEM OF SCHOOL STUDENTS OF RURAL AND URBAN AREA TOWARDS REMOTE LEARNING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The present paper investigates attitude and problem of school students of rural and urban area towards remote learning during Covid-19 pandemic. The study design was descriptive in nature which was focused to school students aged between 12 to 16 years and the primary quantitative data was obtained by self-administered questionnaire through online and offline survey method. During the lockdown period of COVID-19 the whole education system from elementary to higher level has been collapsed not only in India but across the globe. Various stakeholders such as government and private organizations are trying their best to promote remote learning and educational institutions have shifted their base to virtual platforms to conduct classes online. Promoting remote learning is an essential need of hour for the society to cope with inevitable socio-economic changes and to enable more learner-centric 'constructivist' learning models as well. This paper highlights how absolute attainment of this medium of learning is largely depends on its easy accessibility by everyone belong to different socio-economic background and receives positive outcome. Both the positive and negative attitude and problems of rural and urban area school students in using remote learning are studied and compared.

KEYWORDS: Attitude and problem, COVID-19, Remote learning, Rural and Urban area, School students.

INTRODUCTION:

The COVID-19 pandemic is not only spread within the national borders but affected people regardless of nationality, income, level of education also. Due to the serious outbreak of this global pandemic Covid-19 the world is on quarantine and its effects can't only be seen in the industrial sectors but the global education sector as well. Across the world various policy initiatives are being launched by governments and tertiary institutions against the backdrop of the COVID-19 outbreak to continue teaching learning activities. On April 6, 2020, as reported by UNESCO while localized closures have implemented by 188 countries for their educational institutions, which consequently affecting 1,576,021,818 learners (UNESCO 2020). Without stopping learning policy China initiated suspending classes to see that at any time during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown learning was not compromised (Zhang et al., 2020). This is one of the many policies during national lockdowns and school closures China put in place to see that student learning was least affected. Again, Huang, Liu, Tlili, Yang, & Wang, (2020) in their Handbook on Facilitating Flexible Learning During Educational Disruption: The Chinese Experience in Maintaining Undisrupted Learning in COVID-19 Outbreak suggested that governments and education providers need to promote the construction of the educational information further, teachers and students should be equipped with standardized home-based teaching and learning and also to conduct online teacher training, support academic research into online education, to help students with online learning difficulties education should be provided to tackle the problems. As time moved on, due to national lockdowns 500 million children and youth are still threatened with not attending their schools and universities. Although in the draft of new education policy 2019 it is reflected and has been regarded as a proactive and highly techno-efficient step in the time of this pandemic. The government of India started thinking gravely with emphasizing on ICT and use of online education at tertiary level as the part of compulsory teaching-learning process. The government of India introduced Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), a program or Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) platform. The SWAYAM PRABHA dedicated to telecasting of high-quality educational program with a group of 32 DTH channels. MHRD took another initiative known as e-PG Pathshala, a portal launched on November 7, 2015 which is jointly run by the MHRD and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), provided educational resources for teacher educators, teachers, research scholars, students and parents through an online learning platform. On November 13, 2018 MHRD has launched an Annual Refresher Program in Teaching (ARPIT) which is an online professional development program using SWAYAM platform. In the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, UNESCO stated that countries should: Provide alternative modes of learning and education for children and adolescents who are not in education institutions, and put in place equivalency and bridging programs which are recognized and accredited by the state, in both formal and non-formal settings to ensure flexible learning, including in emergency situations. Therefore, it can be said that regarding the challenges and prospects of online education we were not unaware of. Emergency remote teaching is a sudden interim shift of instructional delivery to an online delivery mode comprising of ultimate exploitation of the

available remote teaching tools for delivering the curriculum. Learning from a distance is safer. With remote learning, without putting their health at risk or otherwise disabled students have the same chances to learn as everyone. If children can learn without leaving home, they are not only safer, but also less limited in their choices. Online classes eliminate the need for moving out to pursue our education. With remote learning, students can manage their assignments on their own time, watch recordings of lectures and personalize their learning way. Learning on their own terms encourages them to take responsibility without a teacher watching their every move, which may even give students a head start for college. On the other hand, sudden move from classroom to remote, online learning interrupted learning for children in low-income areas around India. Those families, not able to afford computers and internet access due to the financial constrain was immediately at a disadvantage. Many parents lacked the capacity and skills to take on the role of a teacher, had to start homeschooling their children. In rural India to provide education equally through online is an imaginary thing. Despite it being against the principle of equal opportunity it was taken as an emergency measure like 'something is better than nothing'. Again, in Students' Learning Enhancement Guidelines (LEG) 2020 the NCERT declares that 60-70 per cent students, teachers and parents consider learning satisfactory (NCERT 2020). Everyone must learn to live and survive with the present crisis as it is the beginning only; in the long run, no one can afford the negligence towards digital transformation in education. For a better learning outcome and development to achieve course content, the multimodal approaches could be a better idea to deal with the complexity of remote learning.

OBJECTIVES:

The present research paper focused on the following objectives:

- To study the attitude of male and female students of rural area towards remote learning
- To study the problem faced by male and female students of rural area on remote learning
- To study the attitude of male and female students of urban area towards remote learning
- To study the problems faced by male and female students of urban area on remote learning
- To compare the attitude of male and female students of rural and urban area towards remote learning
- To compare the problems faced by male and female students of rural and urban area on remote learning

METHODOLOGY:

The study is designed as descriptive study which focused to the male and female

high school children (aged between 12-16 years) of rural and urban area. This study is based on primary data. The data have been collected from students who are currently studying in high schools under Gohpur sub division of Biswanath district, Assam. The sample size of this study is 500 respondents. The primary quantitative data is obtained by self administered questionnaire through both online and offline survey method.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

Among 500 respondents 250 were from rural area (consisting of 125 male and 125 female respondents) and 250 were from urban area (consisting of 125 male and 125 female respondents) which means 50 per cent of the respondents were male and 50 per cent respondents were female whereas 50 per cent were from rural area and 50 per cent were from urban area.

Table-1: Attitudes of male and female respondents of rural area (students) N=250

Statement	Agree n (%)		Disagree n (%)		Don't know n (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
I have internet access for remote learning at home	40 (16%)	37 (14.8%)	85 (34%)	88 (35.2%)	0	0
I have gadgets available at my home for online class	40 (16%)	37 (14.8%)	85 (34%)	88 (35.2%)	0	0
I prefer and enjoy remote learning from home	47 (18.8%)	40 (16%)	58 (23.2%)	75 (30%)	20 (8%)	10 (4%)
Online class saves my time so that I can engage myself in other activities	110 (53.65%)	110 (53.65%)	5 (2%)	7 (2.8%)	10 (4%)	8 (3.2%)
Online class decrease my risk of accident, as I do not travel from home to school	100 (40%)	113 (45.2%)	13 (5.2%)	7 (2.8%)	12 (4.8%)	5 (2%)
Online class saves my travel cost, as I do not travel from home to school	115 (46%)	120 (48%)	0	0	15 (6%)	5 (2%)
I have knowledge regarding uses of ICT for online learning	45 (18%)	40 (16%)	75 (30%)	80 (32%)	5 (2%)	5 (2%)
My parents support me using Digital gadgets for remote learning	47 (18.8%)	40 (16%)	72 (28.8%)	78 (31.2%)	6 (2.4%)	7 (2.8%)
I participate in interaction with teachers and classmates during online classes	47 (18.8%)	40 (16%)	78 (31.2%)	85 (34%)	0	0
I make queries regarding doubts during online classes	47 (18.8%)	40 (16%)	78 (31.2%)	85 (34%)	0	0
Our teachers give us assignments	85 (34%)	88 (35.2%)	20 (8%)	26 (10.4%)	20 (8%)	11 (4.4%)
I submit assignments given to me during time period	47 (18.8%)	40 (16%)	78 (31.2%)	85 (34%)	0	0
Our teachers check my assignment and give me feedback	70 (28%)	50 (20%)	55 (22%)	75 (30%)	0	0

Table number 1 highlights the responses on attitude of male and female students of rural area where majority of the respondents (34 per cent of male and 35.2 per cent of female) didn't have internet access and gadgets available for remote learning at their home. Majority of the respondents (23.2 per cent of male and 30 per cent of female) did not prefer and agree remote learning from home. On the other hand, majority of the respondents from rural area (53.65 per cent of male and 53.65 per cent of female, 40 per cent of male and 45.2 per cent of female, 46 per

cent of male and 48 per cent of female) thought that online classes saved their time for which they could engage in other activities, decreased the risk of accident and saved travelling cost as well. Majority of the students (30 per cent of male and 32 per cent of female) responded that they didn't have knowledge regarding using ICT for online learning. Likewise, majority of the students from rural area (28.8 per cent of male and 31.2 per cent of female, 31.2 per cent of male and 34 per cent of female, 31.2 per cent of male and 34 per cent of female) responded that their parents didn't support them using gadgets for remote learning, they didn't participate in interaction and didn't make queries for their doubts during online class. Majority of respondents (34 per cent of male and 35.2 per cent of female) agreed that their teachers gave them assignments but majority of respondents (31.2 per cent of male and 34 per cent of female) said that they didn't submit assignments during time period. Again, almost half of the respondents (22 per cent of male and 30 per cent of female) agreed that their teacher didn't check their assignment and gave them feedback.

Table-2: Problems of male and female respondents of rural area (students) N=250

Statement	Agree n (%)		Disagree n (%)		Don't know n (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
I get disturbed because of poor electricity during online class	110 (44%)	115 (46%)	15 (6%)	10 (4%)	0	0
I get disturbed in online class because of poor internet connection	98 (39.2%)	110 (44%)	11 (4.4%)	5 (2%)	16 (6.4%)	10 (4%)
I engage in household activities and cannot attend class	11 (4.4%)	102 (40.8%)	114 (45.6%)	20 (8%)	0	0
I get disturbed attending online classes because of unwanted noises in surrounding	9 (3.6%)	7 (2.8%)	116 (46.4%)	118 (47.2%)	0	0
I feel depressed because my parents cannot avail me technologies to attend online classes	70 (28%)	82 (32.8%)	55 (22%)	43 (17.2%)	0	0
I feel anxious when I cannot clear my doubts through online class	33 (13.2%)	21 (8.4%)	86 (39.2%)	96 (38.4%)	6 (2.4%)	8 (3.2%)
I feel like suffering from headache or eye problem because of online class.	5 (2%)	9 (3.6%)	117 (46.8%)	111 (44.4%)	3 (1.2%)	5 (2%)
I can clarify my queries through question/answer session of online class	47 (18.8%)	40 (16%)	78 (31.2%)	85 (34%)	0	0
I get notes/lecture materials from teachers even when I am not able to join my online class	52 (20.8%)	66 (26.4%)	73 (29.2%)	59 (23.6%)	0	0

From table-2 it is evident that majority of respondents from rural area (44 per cent of male and 46 per cent of female, 39.2 per cent of male and 44 per cent of female) agreed that they got disturbed during online classes because of poor electricity and internet connection. Likewise, majority of female respondents (40.8 per cent) agreed that they couldn't attend classes due to household activities. On the other hand, majority of respondents (46.4 per cent of male and 47.2 per cent of female) said that they didn't get disturb because of noises in surrounding. Majority of the respondents (28 per cent of male and 32 per cent of female) agreed that they felt depressed because of their parents couldn't avail them technologies to attend online classes. Majority of the respondents (39.2 per cent of male and 38.4 per cent of female, 46.8 per cent of male and 44.4 per cent of female, 31.2 per cent of male and 34 per cent of female) didn't feel anxious when they couldn't clear their doubts through online class, they didn't feel any headache or eye problem because of online classes and they couldn't clear their queries through online class. Only half of the respondents (20.8 per cent of male and 26.4 per cent of female, 26 per cent of male and 17.6 per cent of female) said that they got notes/lecture materials from teachers even when they couldn't able to join online class.

Table-3: Attitudes of male and female respondents of urban area (students) N=250

Statement	Agree (%)		Disagree (%)		Don't know (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
I have internet access for remote learning at home	97 (38.8%)	92 (36.8%)	28 (11.2%)	33 (13.2%)	0	0
I have gadgets available at my home for online class	97 (38.8%)	92 (36.8%)	28 (11.2%)	33 (13.2%)	0	0
I prefer and enjoy Remote learning from home	97 (38.8%)	92 (36.8%)	28 (11.2%)	33 (13.2%)	0	0
Online class saves my time so that I can engage myself in other activities	97 (38.8%)	92 (36.8%)	0	0	28 (11.2%)	33 (13.2%)
Online class decrease my risk of accident, as I do not travel from home to school	113 (45.2%)	118 (47.2%)	0	0	12 (4.8%)	7 (2.8%)
Online class saves my travel cost, as I do not travel from home to school	7. 116 (46.4%)	120 (48%)	0	0	9 (3.6%)	5 (2%)
I have knowledge regarding uses of ICT for online learning	7. 97 (38.8%)	92 (36.8%)	6 (2.4%)	9 (3.6%)	22 (8.8%)	24 (9.6%)
My parents support me using Digital gadgets for remote learning	97 (38.8%)	92 (36.8%)	0	0	28 (11.2%)	33 (13.2%)
I participate in interaction with teachers and classmates during online classes	85 (34%)	90 (36%)	40 (16%)	35 (14%)	0	0
I make queries regarding doubts during online classes	85 (34%)	90 (36%)	40 (16%)	35 (14%)	0	0
Our teachers give us assignments	97 (38.8%)	99 (39.6%)	6 (2.4%)	2 (0.8%)	22 (8.8%)	24 (9.6%)
I submit assignments given to me during time period	98 (39.2%)	95 (38%)	27 (10.8%)	30 (12%)	0	0
Our teachers check my assignment and give me feedback	97 (38.8%)	92 (36.8%)	28 (11.2%)	33 (13.2%)	0	0

Table-3 highlights the responses on the attitude of male and female students of urban area where majority of the respondents (38.8 per cent of male and 36.8 per cent of female) said that they have internet access and available of gadgets for remote learning at home. Likewise, majority of the respondents (38.8 per cent of male and 36.8 per cent of female) said that they prefer and enjoy remote learning from home. Majority of the respondents (38.8 per cent of male and 36.8 per cent of female, 45.2 per cent of male and 47.2 per cent of female, 46.4 per cent of male and 48 per cent of female, 38.8 per cent of male and 36.8 per cent of female, 38.8 per cent of male and 36.8 per cent of female, 34 per cent of male and 36 per cent of female, 38.8 per cent of male and 36 per cent of female) agreed that online classes saved their time so that they could engaged in other activities, online classes decreased the risk of accident, it also saved their travelling cost, their parents supported them using gadgets and they participated in interaction during online class and made queries regarding their doubts. Majority of the respondents (38.8 per cent of male and 39.6 per cent of female, 39.2 per cent of male and 38 per cent of female, 38.8 per cent of male and 36.8 per cent of female) said that their teachers gave them assignments, they submit their assignments during time period and their teachers checked them and also gave them feedback.

Table-4: Problems of male and female respondents of urban area (students) N=250

Statement	Agree n (%)		Disagree n (%)		Don't know n (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
I get disturbed because of poor electricity during online class	22 (8.8%)	19 (7.6%)	94 (37.6%)	95 (38%)	9 (3.6%)	11 (4.4%)
I get disturbed in online class because of poor internet connection	43 (17.2%)	46 (18.4%)	54 (21.6%)	46 (18.4%)	28 (11.2%)	33 (13.2%)
I engage in household activities and cannot attend class	38 (15.2%)	43 (17.2%)	87 (34.8%)	82 (32.8%)	0	0
I get disturbed attending online classes because of unwanted noises in surrounding	12 (4.8%)	19 (7.6%)	85 (34%)	52 (20.8%)	28 (11.2%)	33 (13.2%)
I feel depressed because my parents cannot avail me technologies to attend online classes	28 (11.2%)	33 (13.2%)	94 (37.6%)	85 (34%)	3 (1.2%)	7 (2.8%)
I feel anxious when I cannot clear my doubts through online class	6 (2.4%)	5 (2%)	102 (40.8%)	109 (43.6%)	17 (6.8%)	11 (4.4%)
I feel like suffering from headache or eye problem because of online class	4 (1.6%)	6 (2.4%)	93 (37.2%)	86 (34.4%)	28 (11.2%)	33 (13.2%)
I can clarify my queries through question/answer session of online class	95 (38%)	92 (36.8%)	30 (12%)	33 (13.2%)	0	0
I get notes/lecture materials from teachers even when I am not able to join my online class	107 (42.8%)	114 (45.6%)	18 (7.2%)	11 (4.4%)	0	0

From table-4 it is evident that majority of respondents of urban area (37.6 per cent of male and 38 per cent of female) said that they didn't get disturbed during online classes because of poor electricity. Almost half of the respondents (21.6 per cent of male and 18.4 per cent of female) said that they didn't get disturbed during online classes because of poor internet connection. Only 15.2 per cent of male and 17.2 per cent of female respondents agreed that due to the household activities they couldn't attend online classes. Majority of respondents (34 per cent of male and 20.8 per cent of female) said that they got disturb during their class because of unwanted noises in surrounding. Only 11.2 per cent of male and 13.2 per cent of female felt depressed because of their parents couldn't avail them technologies to attend online classes. Majority of the respondents (40.8 per cent of male and 43.6 per cent of female, 37.3 per cent of male and 34.4 per cent of female) didn't feel anxious when they couldn't clear their doubts through online class, they didn't feel any headache or eye problem because of online classes. Likewise, majority of the respondents (38 per cent of male and 36.8 per cent of female, 42.8 per cent of male and 45.6 per cent of female, 34 per cent of male and 35.2 per cent of female) agreed that they could clear their queries through online class, they got notes/lecture materials from teachers even when they couldn't able to join online class.

DISCUSSION:

1. The study implied that students of urban area have more internet accessibility at home as compare to the students from rural area.
2. Majority of the students from rural area didn't have gadget for remote learning at home where as less number of students from urban area responded for the same problem.
3. Most of the students from urban area prefer and enjoy remote learning from home whereas students from rural area didn't show the same attitude.
4. With regard to the knowledge of using ICT for online learning, the number of students from urban area is more than the rural area.
5. Majority of respondents from rural area said that their parents didn't support using digital gadgets whereas respondents from urban area were supported by their parents using digital gadgets for remote learning.
6. Students from urban area who participated in interaction with teachers and classmates during online classes are more in numbers than the students from rural area.
7. Majority students from rural area responded that they made less queries regarding doubts during online classes, whereas majority of the students from urban area said that they made queries regarding doubts during online classes.
8. The number of students from urban area who submitted assignments given to them during time period is more than the students from rural area.
9. Majority of the students from rural area got disturbed because of poor electricity and internet connection than to the students from urban area during online class.
10. Majority of the female students from rural area agreed that because of household activities they couldn't attend online classes but majority of male students from rural area agreed that they didn't engage in household activities and could attend online classes. Whereas in the case of urban area it is reflected that majority of the students said that they didn't engaged in household activities and could attend online classes.
11. Students from rural area didn't get disturb as much urban area students in attending online classes because of unwanted noises in surrounding.
12. Majority of the students of rural area felt depressed because their parents couldn't avail them technologies to attend online classes whereas majority of the students of urban area disagreed to the same.
13. Majority of the students of urban area agreed whereas students of rural area disagreed regarding clarification of their queries through question/answer session of online class.
14. Majority of the students of urban area agreed that they got notes/lecture materials from teachers even when they were not able to join online classes whereas half of the students of rural area disagreed to the same.

CONCLUSION:

The study reveals that number of similarities and differences in the attitude and problems of school students of rural and urban area towards remote learning during Covid-19 pandemic can be seen. In response to Covid-19 preparing to move education outside of traditional physical classrooms and its successful implementation requires thought, careful decision-making and coordination. Both government and non-government organizations made efforts to support the school system to make a smooth transition to the virtual world and to provide customized teaching-learning material suitable for online classes for school children. This pandemic provided us with the opportunity to adopt online, blended and remote learning in education system. However, this alternative medium has brought some realities of Indian society which stands as barrier to access these online platforms such as social inequalities in terms of availability of resources and gender disparity. These digital platforms used by the elite schools are perpetuating the headship over the education system, resulting in the digital divide between urban and rural and rich and poor. The work and role of the government as well as non-government organizations across states is also affected by this digital divide as they are facing challenges due to the recent migration of millions of laborers to their native places. Both the central and state governments will have to make a road map not only for laborers' employment but for the education of their children as well. They must ensure the availability of reliable communication tools and promote technology-enabled learning for students to bridge the disparities emerged in the education system before and after COVID-19 destruction which is also necessitated for uninterrupted learning.

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